

Watercolor exhibit will delight, intrigue and impress



"Morning Mist Aucoot Cove," left, and "Tidal Inlet" are among the more than 40 watercolors by Mattapoisett artist Mike Mazer on exhibit through today at the Marion Art Center.

By DAVID B. BOYCE, Standard-Times correspondent
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"It is the mood of the scene and in particular how the interplay of light is utilized for the creation of interesting shapes that make for a strong composition in a representational manner rather than the attraction of a specific subject matter itself."

Judging by the array of nearly 40 watercolors included in Mike Mazer's exhibit at the Marion Art Center through today and mixed with the crux of his artist's statement cited above one could draw the conclusion that this artist's mostly local marine subjects were of secondary interest to him. That however would probably run counter to how most admirers feel about his work.

Watercolor is a particularly challenging medium one that in order to be effective requires exceptional control and technique. And because watercolors are so frequently exhibited in galleries located along our coastline (despite its demanding challenges the medium is a favorite with amateurs and hobbyists) we in the often encounter them in varying degrees of accomplishment in great abundance.

Mr. Mazer is a particularly accomplished watercolorist who works principally in the genres of marine sea and landscape. His paintings have been juried into over 160 national and international exhibits and have been honored with 44 awards.

Currently president of the New England Watercolor Society (founded originally in Boston in 1885 as the Boston Watercolor Society with such renowned American artists as Frank Benson Childe Hassam and John Singer Sargent among its members) Mr. Mazer is also an elected member of the Watercolor USA Honor Society and an elected or signature member of over 21 national regional and local art organizations and societies.

This MAC exhibit is an overly generous display of Mr. Mazer's work in the genres for which he is renowned and particularly noteworthy are six paintings that illustrate his interests in light and composition as delineated in his artist's statement. Combined with his gift for technique they rise like cream to the top of the mix.

"Early Morning Light Hiller's Cove" and "Morning Mist Aucoot Cove" are scenes of locations adjacent to the artist's studio and familiar to him. They effectively and sensitively capture a quality of tentative early light for which he is well known among our resident realist artists. "At Dusk II" is an equally successful treatment of its mood and light subject.

A spectacular example of Mr. Mazer's watercolor technique and composition is contained in "Tidal Inlet" a larger than usual piece that is wisely given its own wall in the MAC downstairs gallery. Upstairs another oversize work "Onset Reflections" masterfully commands its space with a bold architectural composition of dockside buildings and boats foregrounded by their reflections in the water. "Dinghy Reflections x Three" focuses in on a similar happenstance without the more complex compositional overstructure.

For art appreciators especially those acquainted with the challenges of the watercolor medium Mr. Mazer's works will delight intrigue and impress. Increasingly he is exploring new directions and subject areas such as figuration and even more formal concerns usually associated with less traditional art movements. I especially applaud him for flexing his aesthetic muscles in those endeavors as artistic progress is made only by reaching beyond one's comfort zones.

"Mike Mazer Watercolors" closes at 5 p.m. today at the Marion Art Center located at 80 Pleasant Street in Marion. Gallery hours are from — to 5 p.m. For more information call (508) 748-1266.

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